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The CIA Historical Program

The CIA Historical Program is an all-Agency program under the direction of the CIA Historical Staff. It includes an overall program and a program for each of the four directorates.

The overall program is concerned with the role of the DCI in the intelligence community and as head of the Central Intelligence Agency, with the history of the Office of the DCI and of components of the DCI Area, and with the overall history of each directorate. The directorate programs deal with the components of each directorate, with their structure, organization, activities, and operations; and emphasize policy decisions, methods and techniques, and causes and significance of what occurred. While the treatment is mainly historical and stresses change over time, it includes also analysis and description.

Currently, the Historical Program consists of a catch-up task and an ongoing, continuing effort, in which 1965 marks the approximate dividing line between the two. Completion of the overtaking part of the program has been set for the end of the calendar year 1971, by the Executive Director-Comptroller. Thereafter the time lag between the latest events mentioned in a history and the date of publication is to be kept at three or four years.

The Chief of the Historical Staff is responsible to the Executive Director-Comptroller for the achievement of the program as a whole. The realization of the overall or top level history is the direct responsibility of the Chief and Deputy Chief. For the programs within the directorates, the Chief and Deputy Chief share responsibility with the historical officers and the historical boards of the directorates.

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The historical effort in the directorates is subject to the direction and guidance of the Chief and Deputy Chief of the Historical Staff with respect to adequacy of coverage, the contribution that directorate histories make to the writing of overall history, and the quality of the product. The Chief and Deputy Chief have direct access to the records of the directorates essential to the writing of overall and directorate history, to the histories produced in the directorate programs, and to the historical officers and writers in all parts of the Historical Program. In directing the program, the Chief and Deputy Chief provide guidance to historical officers and writers, and examine outlines, chronologies, and drafts of writings, whenever this is requested or seems desirable for the establishment and maintenance of good historical standards.

Day-to-day management of the historical program in each directorate is the responsibility of that directorate, and in the case of the Directorate for Plans is achieved through the efforts of its Historical Officer under the guidance of the CS Historical Board. The historical officer of a directorate is chosen by agreement between the Chief of the Historical Staff and the Deputy Director, with assignment to the Historical Staff and a position in its Table of Organization. In all the directorates except the Directorate for Plans, it is intended that the historical officer will write the overall history of his directorate. The substantial historical past of the DDP necessitates the separation of the management of the program from the writing of its history. As in the selection of a historical officer, the choice of a writer for the history of a directorate is made by agreement between the Deputy Director and the Chief of the Historical Staff. As a member of the Historical Staff, the historical officer reports on the status of the directorate program to the Chief of the Historical Staff. The Historical Officer also assists

the Chief in the work of the Staff. He brings the point of view of the Historical Staff to his directorate. Likewise, he brings the point of view of his directorate to the Historical Staff. This function of serving as a channel of communication between Historical Staff and directorate he shares with the chairman of the historical board.

Writers of the overall history of the Agency have access to DDP records necessary for their work through the Chairman of the CS Historical Board. This procedure applies also to permission to interview and debrief DDP personnel.

In addition to the historical officers, the Historical Staff includes a Documents Officer, who is in charge of the Master Source Index, and counsels historical writers on the records and literature related to their assignments. The Documents Officer is aided in the development and maintenance of this Index and in giving advice and guidance by two assistants, who are general intelligence officers. The Documents Officer also maintains a collection of finished overall histories of the Agency, a small working collection of basic Agency documents required for reference purposes, and a selected number of historical sources which other Agency components have not chosen to preserve in their own records management programs.

The Master Source Index was originally a Clandestine Service Index. It is now being expanded into an all-Agency Index. Access to it is limited to the Chief, Deputy Chief, Documents Officer, and the assistants of the Documents Officer. Historical officers and other members of the Historical Staff not included in the above list do not have access to the Index. The Documents Officer, because of the sensitivity of many of the materials in his Index, must be acceptable to all four directorates.

S E C R E T

There is also on the Historical Staff, a Senior Editor, who is responsible for the development of a uniform publication format and for the maintenance of editorial standards. He is senior to other editors in the Program and is available to counsel and assist them. He has access to the work of historical writers in both the overall and directorate programs, except that in the case of highly sensitive materials in a directorate program, access will require the permission of the chairman of the historical board of the relevant directorate.

Until recently there were two editors in the Clandestine Service program. At present there is but one, and a second editor is needed. So far the other directorates have not had their own full-time editors.

A history is regarded as complete when it is accepted by the producing component, the responsible directorate, and the Historical Staff. Thus a history in the program of one of the directorates must be approved by the historical officer of the component, its operating official, the directorate historical officer and the Chief of the Historical Staff. The historical officer of the component reviews the study chiefly for its accuracy and adequacy as a history of the component. The historical officer of the directorate compares the study with other histories in the directorate program and also reviews the study as a contribution to the history of the directorate and for its potential contribution to the overall history of the Agency. The Chief of the Historical Staff evaluates the project for the adequacy with which it recounts the history of the subject, as well as for its contribution to the history of the directorate and the Agency. He also reviews the history for organization, clarity, gaps in reporting, emphasis on the significant, and adequacy of documentation.

S E C R E T

While the primary concern of the Historical Staff is with the writing and publication of histories in an all-Agency program that includes overall and directorate histories, this is not all that concerns it. The Historical Staff is interested also in the identification of records having a historical value, and in their retention, preservation, and speedy retrieval. To this end it works with records management officers and historical officers of components to ensure that valuable historical records are not destroyed. The Historical Staff serves as the adviser and counsellor to the Agency on historical subjects, and as requested, provides support on historical matters of interest to the Agency.

Howard M. Ehrmann
Chief, CIA Historical Staff